

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-5: (canceled).

Claim 6 (currently amended): A vehicular steering apparatus comprising:

a male joint member including a first connecting base portion in a cylindrical shape and an outer spherical face joint portion provided on an axis line of the first connecting base portion and having a spherical outer face;

a female joint member including a second connecting base portion in a cylindrical shape which is adapted to connect with the male joint and an inner spherical face joint portion provided on an axis line of the second connecting base portion and having a spherical space to which the spherical outer face is fitted;

an outer ball guide groove formed at the spherical outer face of the outer spherical face joint portion;

an inner ball guide groove formed at an inner face of the spherical space of the inner spherical face joint portion;

a torque transmitting ball guided by the outer ball guide groove and the inner ball guide groove; and

a ball retainer for retaining the torque transmitting ball,

~~characterized in that~~wherein each of the first connecting base portion and the second connecting base portion includes at least one slit reaching an inner portion of a cylinder of each thereof;

wherein a pair of flanges for fastening are respectively formed on both sides of the slit of each of the first connecting base portion and the second connecting base portion,

wherein each pair of the flange is formed coaxially with fastening holes,

wherein female serrations are formed at both of an inner face of the cylinder of each of the first connecting base portion and the second connecting base portion, and

wherein an interval between a cylindrical hole of the second connecting base portion and the inner spherical face joint portion is formed with a through hole penetrating coaxially, through which the male joint is adapted to penetrate at a time of assembling.

Claims 7-10: (canceled).

Claim 11 (currently amended):      The vehicular steering apparatus according to Claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~wherein an interval between the male joint member and the female joint member is provided with a dust preventing boot in a cylindrical shape having a flexible fold for preventing dust and dirt from invading inside of the spherical space.